

## A. Le concept du subjonctif: temps et modes

When we use verbs, we use them in a certain TENSE and a certain MOOD.

- The TENSE of a verb indicates when the action takes place.  
The PRESENT, the PASSÉ COMPOSÉ, the IMPERFECT and the FUTURE are tenses.
- The MOOD reflects the attitude of the speaker or the subject toward the action.  
The INDICATIVE and the SUBJUNCTIVE are moods.

The INDICATIVE MOOD is *objective*.

It is used to describe *facts*. It states what is considered to be *certain*.

It is the mood of *what is*.

The SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD is *subjective*.

It is used to express *feelings, judgments, and emotions* relating to an action.

It states what is considered to be *desirable, possible, doubtful, or uncertain*.

It is the mood of *what may or might be*.

- ➔ Although the subjunctive is rarely used in English, it is a mood frequently used in French.  
Compare the moods in the following sentences:

(*fact*) Je sais que tu es généreux. *I know that you are generous.*  
(*wish*) Je souhaite que tu sois plus patient avec moi. *I wish that you were more patient with me.*

Both the indicative and the subjunctive may occur in a dependent clause introduced by **que**.

The choice between the indicative and the subjunctive depends on what the subject or speaker expresses in the main clause.

MAIN CLAUSE (the subject expresses . . . )	DEPENDENT CLAUSE
• a <b>fact</b> , a <b>belief</b>	→ INDICATIVE
• a <b>wish</b> , a <b>necessity</b> , an <b>obligation</b> • an <b>emotion</b> or <b>feeling</b> • a <b>doubt</b> or <b>possibility</b>	→ SUBJUNCTIVE

**Le subjonctif:**  
formation régulière  
formation irrégulière

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W	wishes
E	emotions
I	impersonal expressions
R	relative clauses
D	doubts
O	orders
S	superlatives

J'aimerais que...Je voudrais que...  
Je suis triste que...J'ai peur que...  
Il faut que...Il est important que...  
Nous cherchons un secrétaire qui sache taper.  
Je doute que...Je ne pense pas que...  
J'exige que...J'ordonne que...  
C'est le meilleur restaurant que je connaisse.